



Ski-hill Graph Pedagogy Meter Fundamentals: Mathematical Music Theory for Beginners

Andrea M. Calilhanna

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Ski-hill Graph Pedagogy is an ambitious textbook that incorporates math into its work, suggesting a radical method of teaching music.

Andrea M. Calilhanna's book *Ski-hill Graph Pedagogy Meter Fundamentals* is a unique academic text that demonstrates a brand-new approach to teaching music meter to beginners.

An in-depth examination of what ski-hill pedagogy is and how it applies to each aspect of musical meter, the book covers topics including duple and triple meter, swing quavers, and tresillo. Its approach integrates music with math and applies the related knowledge to basic music tuition. Still, complexities remain: its three-step method includes a rounded absorption of the musical skill of meter, said to in turn benefit the learner both as a whole and in their future music practices. Intriguing notes, such as that the auditory system is the largest neural processing network in the brain, support such claims. Thus, as students internalize their knowledge of meter, the book suggests, their playing will improve accordingly.

The book covers a number of tools that a teacher would need to apply its principles when teaching beginners, whether children or adults. Each chapter ends with teaching tips to help with the application of its theories. And the book is systematic about introducing its approach, using diagrams and written explanations to illustrate each step. For example, where a piece of music is labeled with $\frac{3}{4}$ time but has duple meter at different levels, the ski-hill approach is shown to allow those subtleties to be named and demonstrated. These practical demonstrations of applying ski-hill pedagogy pair well with the book's claims regarding the supposed benefits of its approach.

Grounded in academic research, the book is aimed at teachers and those with a thorough grounding in the principles of music theory. It makes extensive use of technical terms throughout; a glossary helps to explain such terms for those not already familiar with them. It references texts that a teacher of music would be familiar with but that a nonmusician might not be, including *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, bolstering its credibility. However, its presumption of preexisting knowledge is also sometimes detrimental, including in places where its explanations are too concise. For example, its coverage of the problems with defining meter in opposition to rhythm is sparse, and it does not include sufficient explanations of what the differences are.

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SARAH FRIDESWIDE (September 18, 2024)

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